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education in America has been slowly raised ; and it is certainly the fact that, in this age, when instruction has become a science, any person who attempts to deal with the education of young men in actual practice, without attempting in some degree to understand their motives and susceptibilities, runs great danger of neutralizing the whole effect of his most conscientious exertions.

HENRY ADAMS.

ART. VI. — THE BUTLER CANVASS.

I.

THE LABOR QUESTION.

THE State Convention of the Republican party, held at Worcester on the 27th of September, 1871, brought a very extraordinary political canvass to an unexpected close. It was extraordinary in many respects, but was especially characterized throughout by a tone of discussion of the lowest possible order, conducted with a spirit of personality unusual even in American politics. The key-note of the campaign in this respect was, indeed, struck at the very outset by a master hand. It was at Springfield that the first public meeting was held. Something rather unusual was here anticipated, and the result did not in any way fall short of expectation. The meeting might not inaptly be described as a true, intellectual Donnybrook Fair, in which every head that was seen was impartially hit. General Hawley, of Connecticut, John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame, Miss Anna Dickinson, Mr. Sanborn, of the "Springfield Republican," "Warrington," Mr. Edward Atkinson, the editors of the "Boston Advertiser" and the "Boston Journal," and many other well-known characters, were now and again dimly visible, or audible, amid the tumult of assault, which was carried on to a vigorous accompaniment of cat-calls, disorderly explanations from the assailed, and responses through the various forms of the lie circumstantial and the lie direct : the united efforts of a brass band were finally called upon, as

an ingenious substitute for the previous question, to put a stop to further debate, and the astonished audience dispersed under the influence of this, the single blast of harmony of which the occasion was guilty. Certain familiar political catch-words, such as "temperance," "labor reform," "retrenchment," etc., had, indeed, been faintly distinguished at intervals above the din of personal allusion, but they were lost as soon as heard, and attracted little attention. The initial meeting was in no respect unworthy of the entire canvass. Throughout it the political fortune of one man was the single question at issue. There was indeed a large amount of fault-finding over alleged existing abuses, though this apparently was intended only to preserve appearances; and there was also more or less blind groping after remedies; but it was nevertheless well understood upon all sides that these were but the rooks and pawns of the game. Yet in a vague, meaningless way the discussion now and again approached some of the most interesting economical and political problems of the day; never presenting them fairly or grappling with them, but showing rather a disposition to make use of them as a means to an end, if, through their agency, the end might more certainly be attained.

It is, however, these indistinct surroundings of the canvass, these mere accessories to the one issue really involved, which gave to it all its permanent interest. The past or future political fortunes of Mr. B. F. Butler do not present a very interesting subject for thoughtful discussion. Possessed of great energy, both of body and mind, and with an amount of vitality for which a parallel would probably be sought in vain in the political annals of this country, neither the military nor the political career of General Butler has hitherto afforded any indication of the possession by him of any of those lofty intellectual or moral qualities which can alone place a public man among the very small class of those who have, by their personal influence, greatly swayed the course of human events. Hitherto this gentleman's career has been more distinguished for those stage effects calculated to draw a startled round of applause from the groundlings, than by any defined and persistent line of policy indicative of one who has either reflected

much or who believes strongly. He is essentially a sensation-alist. Whether coining a legal phrase to meet a military exigency, or hanging a traitor, or exploding a powder-boat, or impeaching a President, or attacking a metallic currency, or proposing a new way to pay old debts, or conducting a canvass, General Butler's eye is always fixed on his audience. His heart cannot be in his work, for he is intently watching the momentary effect he is producing; his public career, in fact, may be said to have hitherto consisted mainly of a varied pyrotechnic exhibition, not of the most successful character.

Passing at once, therefore, over the personal controversies which gave such an unattractive character to the canvass, it is here proposed to discuss at some length those other economical and political questions which gave to that canvass a real significance. First among these were those questions affecting the relations of labor and capital, which are now attracting so much anxious attention both in Europe and in America.

When the Worcester Convention at last reached a ballot, it was found that the friends of General Butler numbered about two fifths of the whole number of delegates, the exact proportion being as forty-one to fifty-nine. This formidable minority was very largely, perhaps one half, made up of those especially interested in what is known as the question of labor reform. Where so large a proportion of the more active political members of any community combine around a party name, they are certainly entitled to demand of their fellow-citizens the respectful consideration of any political views they may entertain. This is their right, which no one should seek to abridge. Every right, however, includes a correlative duty. The duty in this case is clear. It is that those advancing novel opinions, or putting forward new claims, or seeking to engraft an untried policy upon the political system of the community in which they live, shall clearly and succinctly state what they desire, to the end that it may receive an intelligent consideration. In America, from the beginning, this obligation has always been acknowledged. The very first act of the people of the United States, when they came forward to claim a place among the nations of the earth, was formally to recognize it. Jefferson then appeared as their spokesman. Out of "a

decent respect to the opinions of mankind ” which required that they should declare the causes which impelled them to the course then taken, Jefferson expressed in words which will not soon be forgotten the demands of his countrymen. From that day to this, whenever any considerable portion of the American people has sought to organize itself into a separate political existence, it has not failed to follow the precedent thus created. Its first act has been to formulate its demands. When, therefore, the labor reformers of Massachusetts seek to modify the public policy of the State in conformity with their peculiar ideas, the single duty incumbent upon them before they can claim as of right a respectful consideration of their demands, is that they shall state what those demands are, that their fellow-citizens may pass upon them intelligently and decidedly.

This duty they have more than once undertaken to perform, but the success which has hitherto attended their efforts has not been encouraging. Their last attempt was made at the party convention held at Framingham, on the 4th of October, one week subsequent to the day on which the Republican Convention was held at Worcester. The declaration of principles then put forward not only failed to justify their movement, but it is not too much to say that it was an insult to the intelligence of those whose respectful consideration it challenged. In support of a criticism thus unmodified, it is only necessary to quote without comment a few words from the preamble of this singular manifesto, which began thus : “ We affirm as a fundamental principle that labor, the creation of wealth, is entitled to all it creates ” ; and then proceeded, among other logical results of this proposition, to accept “ as the best and grandest of all, the final obliteration of that foul stigma upon our so-called Christian civilization, — ‘ the poverty of the masses.’ ” After this preamble naturally followed a declaration of war with things in general, including more especially the whole “ wages system,” the “ present system of finance,” “ the aristocracy of capital,” and “ public interest-bearing debts,” which last were “ to be paid at once,” or, rather, as the inference would seem to be, at once converted into non-interest-bearing public debts.

A declaration of principles such as this, which, if carried into effect, every common-sense human being in the community

could not but see must only result in starving the laborer by putting a stop to all production, naturally failed to recommend itself to the sober judgment of those to whom it was addressed. This important fact very shortly seemed to suggest itself to the minds of those who had assumed a leadership in the movement. Prominent among these was Mr. Wendell Phillips, who was currently reported to be himself the author of the Framingham resolutions. To one honestly attempting by a calm study of first principles to arrive at some satisfactory solution of the great social, political, and economical questions of the day, Mr. Phillips is perhaps a scarcely more profitable subject of contemplation than General Butler. This gentleman's mind, never strong in its reasoning and reflecting attributes, would seem to have been entirely thrown from its poise by the brilliant success which attended his connection with the anti-slavery struggle. Throughout that long contest he was in his element. Well adapted by nature to any work of destruction, it simply devolved upon him there to sustain a vehement and incessant assault upon an institution which was the mere creature of law. The labor question, however, manifestly required for its treatment far higher qualities of mind. In America, at least, there was no law to be repealed, no institution to be assailed and overthrown. Elated with his success as a puller down, Mr. Phillips has shown a strong disposition to thrust himself prominently forward as a builder up. The very accomplishments, however, which had constituted the essential element of his strength in carrying out the self-ordained task of his earlier life seemed peculiarly calculated to unfit him for the task now assumed in his later years. Essentially, no less by nature than by long study and habit of mind, a rhetorician, and a very brilliant one, rhetoric has long since become with Mr. Phillips a disease. He is a leading advocate of the cause of temperance as well as of that of labor reform, but his temperance does not extend beyond the use of alcoholic stimulants, and includes no moderation in the use of language. A striking figure of speech or a brilliant metaphor is to him what his dram is to the confirmed inebriate. Neither discretion nor logic nor fact nor reflection seem able to restrain this diseased appetite; the temptation is irresistible, — he is nothing unless

rhetorical. Accordingly the marginal glosses, as they from time to time, and with short intervals between, emanated from the author of the Framingham resolutions, did not greatly promote the cause of his followers. At one time he resorted to illustration, reverting like an American Rousseau to some imaginary condition of human affairs antecedent to all civilization. He pictured the naked savage gathering the natural fruits of the earth, and in this case he declared that the fundamental principle enunciated at Framingham held true. The ingenious savage next contrives a hoe, and uses it himself; and still the fundamental principle was there. Pleased with his invention, the simple child of rhetoric makes another hoe, and using this himself, proceeds to allow a less ingenious contemporary to make use of the old hoe—for a consideration. At this point the fundamental principle seemed in jeopardy, but its author, nothing daunted, rushed forward and imagined the savage creation of his eloquence abandoning the handling of his hoe and betaking himself wholly to hoe-making and hoe-letting, and then, at last, he fearlessly denounced him as a monopolist. The fundamental principle might tolerate the letting of one hoe and perhaps the letting of ten; nevertheless, somewhere the line must be drawn, and clearly the fundamental principle could not tolerate a thousand hoes.

Not unnaturally this lucid abandonment of a position calmly assumed but a few days before, failed to commend itself to the general judgment. In a few days Mr. Phillips tried again. He struck deeper now; he was more radical and more rhetorical than was customary even with him. He took for his text the words, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread until thou return unto the ground," and proceeded to denounce that natural order of things which had resulted in making toil a condition precedent to eating. The inference was not to be avoided that a vigorous labor-reform movement had been greatly needed at the time of the expulsion from Eden, and that even yet well-organized political action might result in the reversal of the primal curse and in the restoration of mankind to its prehistoric privileges.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this utterance fell upon the astonished ears of his fellow-citizens with scarcely more

practical effect than the previous ones. Once more Mr. Phillips had recourse to his rhetoric. There are two ways of stating the proposition he next enunciated. There is the way prosaic and the way sensational. Mr. Phillips naturally resorted to the latter, and in this form it had a certain aspect of novelty; in its prosaic form, however, the identical proposition had been stated of another people at least forty years before. In 1830 an American clergyman returning from a visit to Europe had remarked, no less wisely than wittily, "The people of France don't know what they want, and will never be satisfied till they get it." On behalf of the labor-reformers of Massachusetts, Mr. Phillips now assumed exactly this position; he took the epigrammatic saying of Mr. Harness, revolved it in his own mind, and gave it to the public in this rhetorical dress: "Well, there are a set of men, with everything convenient about them, with two suits a year, as Dogberry says, — enough to spend, and a good credit at the bank, — and they say, 'Hulloa, what is your remedy? Tell us now, right off.' 'Why,' we say, 'we are not prepared to tell you, and *you have no right to ask*. All we know is, that there are uncounted millions of men that have not a fair chance in the world, and somehow or other we mean to right it, and if you want to help us, come on, and if you do not we will trample you under our feet.'" (Applause.)

Of course further discussion was useless. The destroyer had ignominiously failed in his self-assumed task of construction. Not only had he failed, but there was something which touched the verge of the ludicrous, in his utter inability to appreciate the cause of his failure; he could only vaguely be conscious of it, and then, angrily resorting to his familiar weapons, threaten dire destruction to all around if they did not do for him what he had so confidently undertaken to do for himself. It was with no such poverty-stricken declamation as this that slavery was assailed, and it very fitly concluded with an appeal to brute force and to fear. Paris has long been accustomed to this mode of reasoning, and it is very remotely possible that Mr. Phillips may succeed in importing it into Massachusetts. The labor-reform party of the State as a political organization may develop great strength at the polls,

and secure a strong hold on the popular sympathy, such as a similar party has long enjoyed and used in France; guided by the brilliant rhetoric of their leader, it is possible that they may achieve great political success in America, as more than once they have done in Europe; they may remodel the statute-book to suit their views, recording upon it perhaps an indignant repeal of the obnoxious "sweat-of-the-brow" law; they may decree that all property is robbery, and that all toil is but one form of oppression; they may perhaps do all this and much more, for others have already elsewhere done no less, and as much will often be done hereafter: one thing, however, they cannot do; they cannot, appearing as a distinct political organization in the calm forum of reason and common sense, — they cannot demand a discussion of the political remedies which shall go to the root of their grievances, until they are in some degree prepared to state what those grievances and their remedies are.

Meanwhile it is certainly a most noticeable fact that so large an element of inarticulate discontent should exist in Massachusetts. There it is, however, and because it is discontented, because it is inarticulate, not being able to express what it wants, it instinctively resorts to political agitation and seeks comfort in rhetoric. The result is that a vague despairing sort of cry goes up from all political circles that something must be done; that one party must take decided and advanced ground upon the labor question, or else that the other will. In other words, political success is to be purchased by throwing a tub to this whale. It nevertheless remains to be proved that any such ground can be taken which will constitute anything more than a mere tub to a whale. There is, in fact, a frightful gap in the labor-reform logic. The leaders of the movement assert that great poverty and distress and inequality of fortune exist in this world. Yes; so do much disease and sickness and deformity. When they take the next step, however, and declare that the remedy for the evils of the first class is to be worked out through political agitation, they assume a position for which some ground may exist in Europe, but which, in view of the political system which has always obtained in America, is apparently as unwarranted as it would be to as-

semble in convention the lame, the halt, the blind, and the insane, and, after duly denouncing "that foul stigma upon our so-called Christian civilization," — the disease of the masses, — they were to organize for the purpose of emancipating mankind from it "by the conquest of political power." In each case both premise and conclusion are at fault. The masses in New England are no more afflicted with poverty than they are with disease ; unless the poverty-stricken class is made to include the whole of those ninety-nine out of every hundred in New England who in some way have to work, and work hard, for a living. Even, however, if the premise was sound, unless this general poverty was the result of legislation, how could legislation remedy it ? Mr. Phillips confesses his inability to point to any law which either has caused or will mitigate the woes which he asserts exist. His complaint then reduces itself to this, that in a community where almost every one "earns his bread by the sweat of his brow," the toil of one man commands from the community a higher price than the toil of some or most other men. This is doubtless in the eyes of many conclusive evidence of the unjust and clumsy handiwork of the Almighty, and, perhaps, an advancing civilization may remedy this evil, and, through some ingenious state machinery, may turn out men and women, like bullets or Waltham watches, on a standard pattern of exact equality. Then, of course, the capacity of all men being exactly equal, the services of none will command a premium, and inequality of condition will disappear. Meanwhile, now and for a long time to come, neither the individual American nor that social system of which he is a part at all partake of the character of those ductile substances which may be run in a uniform mould. Individuality, indeed, rather than uniformity, is the characteristic of the race. It would apparently, therefore, be futile even to attempt a radical measure of reform, and Mr. Phillips himself would seem to recoil from it. The average man is, however, singularly subject to all kinds of political deception ; he loves, in fact, above all things, to be doctored ; and, if political organizations desire, it will call for no great degree of cunning skill to compound some soothing-syrup, or even an infallible nostrum, to meet the present demand ; an additional "lie upon the statute-book" is a

matter of no great consequence. But to the honest investigator, the good citizen, or the practical philanthropist, such a course is not satisfactory, — it partakes too much of the nature of a trick. Here is a serious question ; it deserves serious consideration. The presence of a recognized discontented class is perhaps the most alarming symptom which can develop itself in a free country. When the existence of such a class is once acknowledged, as it now is in Massachusetts, those who wish well to the public can hardly apply themselves to a more profitable work than to a study of the causes from whence this discontent originated, and to the conditions upon which its development depends. Such an investigation is not likely to lead to any brilliant remedial results, for few except the ignorant or cunning have any faith in the statute panaceas, — the labor-reform Buchus and the temperance Mandrake Pills with which the political Helmbolds and old Dr. Jacobs are constantly drenching the body politic ; it is scarcely probable that this generation will see the Garden of Eden restored by act of Legislature. Nevertheless, if a disorder is confessed in the body politic, the discussion of its causes and conditions will be far from unprofitable, if it only induces a few to value at their real worth the infallible nostrums of political knaves and charlatans.

The change of political character which has of late become so noticeable in Massachusetts is a thing of no sudden growth. For many years the State has been passing through a phase of social alteration as complete as it was gradual. It was the peculiar growth of its people which made New England, as a whole, the force which it had ever been upon this continent at the time this change began. Exacting a scanty subsistence out of a penurious soil, under a temperate but rugged climate, its population seemed to afford a certain illustration of the Darwinian principle of natural selection. The rough, variable climate and the harsh east winds killed off all but the more robust and enduring, who slowly developed in the course of generations into a race characterized it may be by not a few unattractive qualities, but withal shrewd, saving, energetic, and conservative ; hard-headed, perhaps, but singularly self-balanced. The introduction of railroads revolutionized New England even more completely than most other countries. It did this in two

ways : in the first place by opening to the New-Englander an easy path out of his native land to the fertile regions of the interior ; and, on the other hand, it opened into New England a way no less easy for all the products of that rich interior. To any person endowed, not with a gift of prophecy, but with an uncommon degree of human foresight, the future of the New England population in 1830 would have seemed wellnigh hopeless. How was this people to continue to produce, when the results of production did not pay for their cost ? Then it was that the New England population displayed once more that singular fertility of resource which has never yet proved unequal to an emergency. Up to that time, or very nearly up to it, the sea and the soil had been the two great sources from which this people had forced a subsistence ; and it was the contact with their rugged sea and scarcely less rugged soil which, as a people, had made them what they were. They were gradually driven from the sea by the principle of protection to home industry, which was engrafted upon the policy of the national government ; and they were driven from the soil by the superior productive power of the West. In the one case protection deprived them of their occupation, and in the other free-trade put it out of their power to raise food. Crushed apparently between the upper and the nether millstone, they took counsel, not of politicians and orators and legislatures, but of their own ingenuity. The sea and the farm ceased to be their chosen fields of labor, and they turned their busy brains and cunning hands to the manufacture of those myriad useful and ingenious articles of which others stood in need. The whole population, however, as a consequence of this change in physical life, entered upon a new phase of development ; it passed from being an active, out-of-door race of fishermen and farmers, living in small villages and enjoying a singular equality of human possessions, into a manufacturing community drawn closely together in large towns and working under cover, with a vast accumulation of worldly possessions very unequally divided.

The political system of the community, meanwhile, underwent no corresponding change. It was still in outward form the old, democratic system of New England ; a system based upon local self-government, and real as well as theoretical

equality. For the democracy of New England from the beginning had little in it of the doctrinaire, nor was it run to order in any statute mould; no Rousseau nor Voltaire, no Victor Hugo nor Louis Blanc, had ever acted as sponsor for it, but it had grown up the gnarly offspring of the farm and of the fishing-smack, so that, like most good things of natural growth, it possessed in no small degree the strong, racy flavor of a native product of the soil. It was a practical, as contradistinguished from a theoretical rule of the people. Every one took part in the government, because the government was simple in form and every one felt a direct interest in having it good. Though the forms have remained to the present time in all material respects the same, yet that subtle influence which from the beginning communicated to them their essential principle of life long since began to disappear. A manufacturing population cannot fail in the long run to develop characteristics very unlike those of a rural or sea-going people. So it has been in the case of New England, and especially of Massachusetts. Fifty years ago there was not a city government in the State; the citizens governed themselves from their own town-halls. In the year 1820—at which time the industrial change referred to was in its earliest stages of development—there were but six towns in Massachusetts which numbered a population of over five thousand souls. These were all situated upon the seaboard and took rank in the following order:—

Boston	43,298
Salem	12,731
Newburyport	6,852
Charlestown	6,591
Gloucester	6,384
Marblehead	5,630
Total	<hr/> 81,486

They were all commercial or fishing communities, and were accounted the flourishing and wealthy centres of a Commonwealth, the entire population of which amounted to only 523,287 souls. But sixteen per cent of the population of half a century ago in Massachusetts dwelt in towns of over

5,000 inhabitants. Then began the growth of manufactories and the rise of interior towns. The figures of the recent census reveal the progress of this industrial revolution with startling significance. Instead of only six towns of over 5,000 inhabitants, as in 1820, the returns of 1870 showed nineteen cities and towns of over 12,000. They ranked as follows :—

	Population in 1870.	Population in 1820.
1. Boston,	250,526	43,298
2. Worcester,	41,107	2,962
3. Lowell,	40,928	—
4. Cambridge,	39,634	3,295
5. Lawrence,	28,921	—
6. Charlestown,	28,323	6,591
7. Lynn,	28,233	4,515
8. Fall River,	26,766	1,594
9. Springfield,	26,703	3,914
10. Salem,	24,117	12,731
11. New Bedford,	21,320	3,947
12. Taunton,	18,629	4,520
13. Chelsea,	18,547	642
14. Gloucester,	15,389	6,364
15. Somerville,	14,685	—
16. Haverhill,	13,082	3,070
17. Newton,	12,825	1,850
18. Newburyport,	12,595	6,852
19. Adams,	12,090	1,836
Totals,	674,420	107,981

The second town of the Commonwealth in 1820 was the tenth in 1870, while the third in the first period ranked as the eighteenth in the second ; and three manufacturing cities, which in 1820 had no corporate existence at all, in 1870 exceeded in population the six leading places of Massachusetts taken together at the earlier date. In 1820, again, 84 per cent of the population of the State lived in communities which averaged less than 1,500 inhabitants each ; in 1870, 50 per cent lived in communities of over 10,000 each. To those in any way acquainted with the industries of Massachusetts, a single glance at the list of cities just enumerated will sufficiently indicate the change which has taken place in the character of the occupations of her people ; were such proof not at hand, however, conclusive evidence of it would be found in the fact that, in the twenty years between 1845 and 1865, the proportion in

money value of the manufactures of the State to her entire industry increased from 61 to 73 per cent, while the value of her fisheries and foreign imports, though positively undiminished, had experienced a proportional decrease of from 22 to 8 per cent of the whole. Meanwhile this shifting of the population from the deck and the farm to the mill and the workshop, this abandonment of out-of-door in favor of in-door occupation, has not yet had time fully to develop its results. One half of the population of the State still live in towns of the smaller size, and cling to the forms of New England town government. This cannot, however, much longer continue to be the case. The census of 1890 will, not improbably, find three quarters of the inhabitants of Massachusetts crowded together at a comparatively few centres, belonging to the operative class, and dwelling under representative, municipal governments. Yet twenty years should in the life of a commonwealth be regarded as hardly more than a day; certainly 1852 does not now seem very far removed from the present time. Since 1850, however, the growth of the population of the nineteen towns just enumerated has been 90 per cent, while the three hundred and nineteen remaining towns of the Commonwealth have averaged an increase of but 21 per cent. The same proportional growth during the next twenty years would, in 1890, place nearly two thirds of the inhabitants of the State within these nineteen municipalities alone.

Hence it seems not improbable that it must soon devolve upon the Massachusetts community to grapple with the difficult task of maintaining a government, republican in spirit as well as in form, with a population a majority of which is congregated in cities. Now there are many things in the nature of conditions precedent essential to the stability of any form of popular government; for, popular cant to the contrary notwithstanding, a republic can no more spring from the smoke of a street-fight, than a self-contained population can be improvised in a day. Long training in the school of self-restraint, intelligence, a sufficiency of education, a spirit of accustomed respect for the law as contradistinguished from the sentiment of dynastic loyalty, a belief in their own destiny springing from that indefinable something known as public spirit,—

all these are essential to the permanence of popular government; but both above and below all these there must exist throughout the mass of the people a solid basis of general contentment and average prosperity. The old English catchword, that the country must be governed by those who have a stake in the soil, contains in it not only a considerable element of solid sense, but, when broadly considered, a vast deal of human happiness; for there is no possible community at once so contented, so conservative, and so tenacious of the rights of property as one largely made up of those who have by their own efforts made themselves the owners of a moderate competence. It matters little whether this be a stake in the land, in the public debt, in the railroad system, or in the savings banks,—the ownership of that which a person has toiled for hard and long, of that which, in spite of all rhetorical denunciation, he has “earned by the sweat of his brow,” makes of that person a conservative in politics. Where wealth accumulates, education and reflection not infrequently make men radical reformers; they see, or think they see, through and beyond many human regulations, and they chafe at the obstinacy with which mankind insists on hampering its own progress. It is this class which commonly furnishes the great reformers—the Smiths, the Benthames, the Cobdens, the Romillys, and the Mills—who leave landmarks in history. Among the less wealthy, however, the case is otherwise. Education is with them rarely elaborated to that point which enables a man to look through the superficial aspect of problems and clearly see the hidden truth beyond. Accordingly, when persons of this class possess any property, they are apt to meet in a spirit of fierce hostility any attack upon what custom has taught them to consider the vested rights or established muniments of that property. There is probably no community in the world to-day so intensely and hopelessly conservative as the rural population of France; that population which, three quarters of a century ago, in the abject despair of utter destitution, recognized no rights of property and cared for no form of government. The provisions of the code Napoleon regulating the transmission of land worked the complete metamorphosis of this people in a single generation. The soil was divided up,

and each new subdivision was a reinforcement of conservatism. The Empire gave to French peasants "a stake in the soil," and the Empire failed to sustain itself simply because it was unable to give the same bribe to the dwellers in large cities.

Passing away from these general considerations, it remains to state the essence of the problem now confronting Massachusetts. That a social and political change is going forward in the State is indisputable; its nature and course of probable development have already been pointed out. The old divisions of population are shifting; industry and growth are passing from the country into the towns, from the yeoman to the operative. Political control is thus passing out of the hands of those who have a direct and easily perceptible stake in the government into the hands of those who, under the existing social and economical arrangement, either have no such stake, or if they have, enjoy it only in some more remote form, as government securities or savings-bank deposits, the connection of which for profit or loss with the political changes they may seek to inaugurate is not to them immediately apparent. It is this last class, the remotely interested, which is now the most growing political element in Massachusetts. There are few indeed of the citizens of this State who have nothing. The tax returns, it is true, apparently indicate that forty-two per cent of the voters of the Commonwealth pay only the poll-tax. Numerous alarming conclusions have been drawn from them, but these, like many official figures, are calculated only to deceive. The statement is in fact rather assuring than alarming. The return includes only those property-holders who themselves pay a property in addition to a poll tax. The savings banks of the State, however, also return 488,797 depositors; how many of these pay any tax other than the poll-tax? Yet the deposits amount to \$135,745,097, in nearly every dollar of which some voter has an interest direct or indirect, and the total number of voters in the State is probably less than 285,000 in all. The holders of United States securities, again, pay no tax upon that class of property, which has lent to it a practical value in the eyes of many citizens who do not deposit in savings banks, but who have a strong antipathy to taxes. Finally, there is an immense mass of stocks,

bonds, and securities of all kinds in regard to property in which no record exists, but which are eagerly sought, because, in practice, it rests solely with the holder whether he will contribute his share to the public expenditure or not. It is probably safe to say of the voting population of Massachusetts, that, instead of being nearly equally divided between those who have and those who have not, nine out of every ten should be classed among those who have, and, of those nine who have, probably not less than six hold their possessions as bought "by the sweat of their brows." The vast majority of the people are therefore capitalists; they themselves belong in a greater or less degree to the class of oppressors with whom some of their number declare such relentless war. Let a new plank be inserted in the next Framingham platform, denouncing the aggressions of the savings-bank capitalists, and proposing to curtail the profits which these "privileged classes" extort from needy debtors, and probably a good deal of new light would be shed upon the ownership of property in Massachusetts. At present the great political difficulty in the case arises from the fact that the smaller holders of this class of property fail to appreciate what is known as the solidarity of capital; they do not understand how a war waged on capital in one form in which they are not interested can possibly affect capital in some other form in which they are interested. Yet upon no interest in the Commonwealth would an honest reduction to practice of the Framingham declaration fall more fatally than upon the savings banks; for through the machinery of these savings banks the working men and women habitually lend their capital in vast amounts to the capitalists, and then the labor-reform leaders, so called, fiercely denounce them for using it. When the connection is one step less remote, the depositor is not slow to perceive it. This was seen in the case of General Butler's earlier proposition to tax the coupons on United States bonds. With the mass of the people this fell upon wholly unsympathetic ears, and in no small degree because so large a proportion of these securities (\$23,000,000 in Massachusetts alone) were held by the savings banks; thousands who had never seen a United States bond yet had a sense of proprietorship in them.

The mass of the American people, including all the labor reformers, are therefore already capitalists, and, as such, are subject to all those appeals to which capitalists are of all men most liable. The difficulty in the case is that, through the agency of savings banks, etc., they prefer to lend their money to be used by others, rather than to use it themselves. Every dollar of the \$136,000,000 held by this class in Massachusetts is somewhere used in production ; and it is against its aggressions that in part they are so fiercely contending. The savings-bank capitalists, for instance, in very great degree built the Western Railroad of Massachusetts, and the operation they found a very profitable one. The marvellous complexity of modern civilization, however, has made the interconnection and interdependence of all the parts hard to understand. Formerly, in the early, simple days of Massachusetts, almost every man himself owned or was directly interested in the tools with which he worked ; the share of that which he produced which fell to his lot was sufficiently apparent to give him a sense of ownership. But the operative of to-day, as production is now carried on, has no perceptible interest in the quality or quantity of that which results from his labor ; his tools do not belong to him, and that they ever will is very remotely possible. As a rule, therefore, the Massachusetts operative has two different characters,—in so far as he is a capitalist, he belongs to the savings-bank system ; in so far as he is a laborer, he belongs to the manufacturing system : it will then invariably be found that *quoad* capitalist he is the most conservative of mortals, while *quoad* operative he is the most radical.

Unquestionably this indicates a but partially developed condition of intelligence. It would, however, be possible to bring home these great principles of solidarity to the minds of the mass of mankind only through a slow process of education. One thing, however, is appreciated by the lowest order of intelligence, that is, ownership. As the operative class in America have, through the agency of savings banks, been taught during the last half-century to make themselves capitalists, it now remains in the next half-century to carry the system of education one step further in advance, and to teach

them to use their own capital, or, in other words, to make themselves capitalists in the line of their own occupations.

Labor, says Mr. Mill, needs capital, not the capitalist. This may be true of England, but it is not of America; labor with us has capital; it has superabundance of capital, but it has not yet learnt how itself to employ it. Up to this time the subdivisions of labor have greatly outstripped the combinations of capital belonging to labor. The end to which all true friends either of labor reform or of free institutions should now, and for a long time to come, direct their efforts, is the development among all classes of this savings-bank system, but extending its field of operation beyond being a mere machinery for the safe-keeping of hoardings, over the wide field of all other occupations in which capital is the most important tool which labor needs. The mill and the factory must be made the savings bank of the future. The operative must again feel as he works that he himself has accumulated by the sweat of his brow, not an account in the institution over the way, but a share in the building in which he works, in the machine with which he works, and in the results of his daily labor. The sense of proprietorship, that dignity of ownership which has in all times and in all countries accompanied the possession of any part, no matter how small, of the soil, must be imparted to those who handle the tool. In this way, and in this way only, can that subtle essence of conservatism, which is the underlying strength of all free institutions, be widely disseminated among the operative class. When at last it is, as in progress of time it surely will be, so disseminated, then, and not till then, will labor have capital, itself being the capitalist; and should New England work out for itself this new problem in its existence, the last and greatest danger confronting the existence of free institutions in America would be postponed to a remote future.

Nor indeed is this great change so remote as many suppose. It is but the first step which costs, and in the institution of savings banks the first step was long since taken. It now only remains for the individual members of the laboring class themselves to take control of that which they have long accumulated. It is in this respect that New England is now behind the head of the movement. Yet the

most flourishing of all the New England cities, that in which the growth most nearly resembles the mushroom development of the West, fails but little of being a monument both of the feasibility and of the great material success of this theory reduced to practice. The spindles of Fall River have multiplied from 241,218 in 1865 to 1,017,114 in the present year. The great secret of this development lies in the fact that almost every person at all prominently concerned in the operation of any mill in that thriving town is himself a stockholder directly interested in it. The division of capital and of industry has not as yet experienced its complete development; but the principle is established; the rest can hardly fail to follow.

No matter how soon it may follow, the initiative in this reform cannot now be claimed by the operatives of Massachusetts. They are already and must long continue far behind those of England. They may learn much more from the statistics of Oldham than from the rhetoric of Mr. Phillips. They might learn that in this single manufacturing borough, numbering only twice the population of Fall River, there are now seven thousand operatives who have not only "declared war upon the wages system," but have emancipated themselves from it. That these men and women now have a capital of \$1,500,000 invested in cotton mills and in looms, and that in a single one of these mills, itself representing not less than half a million of dollars, nine tenths of the shareholders are workmen. Lest they should be doubtful of their own capacity to take charge of their own savings, they might further ascertain that eight per cent was the average profit on the investments of these people, and that their profit on cotton-spinning was over twelve per cent. Should they desire to examine the accounts of any particular institution, they might select those of the Sun Mill, which during six years has averaged sixteen and a half per cent of profit, and in the third quarter of 1871 realized not less than forty per cent.*

* The profits here specified seem large, and yet a suggestive illustration of the increased economy resulting from a direct interest of the employee in the results of his saving has recently been furnished in the experience of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The superintendent of motive-power and machinery of that company says

That with all their great natural adaptation and resource, and that with all their vast accumulation of savings at command, the operatives of New England have not already accepted and bettered this instruction can hardly be considered as otherwise than evidence wellnigh conclusive that the wages system has not yet pressed very harshly upon them. When the mill-owner becomes oppressive, we may be tolerably sure that a large portion of our operatives will own their own mills. As yet in Massachusetts the workshop has, as a rule, proved a less remunerative place of deposit than the savings bank. A few experiments have succeeded, such as those at Somerset, at Wakefield, and at North Adams, and it is pleasant to read of these in an official report that "the operatives speak with pride of their new feelings of self-reliance and freedom, as well as of the quality of their work and the tendencies developed toward a more economical production than before." In spite, however, of an incipient restlessness, it is very evident that in Massachusetts at least no spirit of dissatisfaction as yet exists too deep to be satisfied with the dry husks of political agitation.

Meanwhile it is not probable that this simple and humane solution of a question which they are striving to convert into one of great political magnitude will seem in any way satisfactory to those who have assumed the leadership of the labor movement. Their object is the incorporation into the statute-book of something which shall have the appearance of regulating the relations between capital and labor. This in fact is the *ignis fatuus* of the Anglo-Saxon mind, — this faith in legislation. That a vision, a dream, should be stereotyped into a law, is the ultimate idea of the doctrinaire reformer. That this law

in a recent report: "The plan adopted by my predecessor for encouraging the engineers and firemen to economize in the use of fuel and stores has also been beneficial in reducing the expenses in these items, and for this year there has been a saving of \$63,576.44 (total expenditure, \$728,719.08), one half of which will be divided as premiums among the men. . . . In the economical use of oil for lubricating freight and passenger cars there has also been a saving over that of 1869 amounting to 49,096 quarts; and, taking the consumption of 1868 as the basis, the moneyed value of saving at the average cost for this year is \$11,682.23, one third of which will be distributed in premiums." — *Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company*, pp. 51, 52.

may seek to regulate something far too subtle to admit of regulation through the machinery of the statute-book is a matter of secondary consideration ; the mere existence of the law, though it be violated openly and notoriously, though its friends delight in proclaiming it " a lie upon the statute-book," is still considered a something worth struggling for. With such a sentiment it is useless to reason ; it is, after all, little more than the Anglo-Saxon method of appealing to force, after the moral sense of the community has long since refused to allow the use of force. Accordingly with that solid good sense which constitutes the surest guaranty of social stability, the whole community, agitated simply upon the surface, subsides into a tacit agreement that every one shall have all that he desires ; upon the one hand, he who wants it places his law upon the statute-book, and, on the other hand, he who does not desire it commits almost unmolested the acts forbidden by it. Such a singular compromise may for a time bear the outward aspect of an ingenious solution of a troublesome problem ; in reality, however, it is effected only at the cost of that deep respect for the law which corresponds in republics to that loyalty which is the essence of monarchical institutions. A free community which purchases a temporary repose at this price is continually expending its capital.

Massachusetts should then meet this grave question neither in the spirit of the doctrinaire nor of the charlatan ; her citizens can learn no good lesson from the doings of the Commune nor from the teachings of the Internationals. Hitherto when questions not less nearly affecting social or material well-being have confronted them, the difficulty has been overcome, not so much by tricks of speech or cunning sleight-of-hand, as by the exercise of a hard, practical common sense. It must be the same here now, if any results worthy of the past record of the State are to ensue. Every citizen must from his inmost soul desire to see each industrious member of the community enjoying that sense of dignity which is inseparable from the consciousness of proprietorship ; can this, however, be communicated by law ? There is no man who himself has a stake in the country who must not wish that every other citizen had a stake in it also ; but is this a matter for statute

regulation? When, therefore, politicians and party organs cry out despairingly that some ground must be taken on these questions; when they cast about vaguely to see what new and meaningless enactment, to amuse and dispel a recognized popular discontent, can be recorded on the statute-book, it is then especially incumbent upon every honest and thinking citizen to assert distinctly, not only that reform does not lie in this direction, but also that every such new departure is but one more false departure, the worst feature of which is that it distracts attention from the real remedy. He should at all times and in all places, steadily and temperately, maintain that what the occasion demands of Massachusetts is to make of herself one great voluntary industrial copartnership, — a vast co-operative workshop, in which every industrious man might, should he so desire, feel, in the midst of his toil, that he worked with his own tools and to his own profit. He should point out that here capital already belongs to labor, and in no stinted measure also; and that capital, intelligence, skill, and industry, every condition necessary to success, being thus at hand, the Massachusetts community might now enter upon this momentous experiment with a great assurance of success. Above all, he should denounce every attempt to promote the interests of labor through political agitation as a dangerous error, calculated only to postpone that which it seeks to expedite. If, therefore, it should prove to be one consequence of the Butler campaign, that the attention of the so-called workingmen is distracted from the pursuit of those solid results for the attainment of which they need seek no aid outside of themselves, then will that campaign have inflicted a lasting injury both upon the laboring men and upon the Commonwealth. An experience, none the less bitter because very old, will finally convince them also that the millennium, when it comes, will not be heralded by a constable enforcing a law. In spite of all the politicians and party exigencies and campaign platforms that ever existed, neither this generation nor many succeeding ones will ever materially improve the condition of mankind in any way other than by a considerable expenditure of muscle in honest toil, under the direction of an educated brain. Epigrams and promises will no more elevate labor than they will produce wealth.

The relation of labor to capital was not the only subject discussed during the Butler canvass. Many other questions of equal, if not in America at least, of more general interest were remotely involved, — questions closely affecting the existence of all government under written constitutions, because they affect the practical working of those governments; such questions, for instance, as those relating to the allocation of powers among the several departments, — the relations of the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary to the community and to each other, — the evils of excessive and the absurdities of special legislation, — the creation and usefulness of commissions charged with the care of particular interests, and indeed most of those important features in constitution-making with which Frenchmen always, and Americans of late, have shown so strong a disposition to try logical and theoretical experiments. It cannot truthfully be asserted that General Butler's discussion of these topics was any more creditable to his taste, honesty, or political knowledge, or any more respectful to the intelligence of his audience, than were the personalities or the economical doctrines which marked his treatment of the other subjects which he saw fit to present. At this time, however, so peculiarly prolific of constitutional conventions, these questions of government will have an interest, no matter who may belittle their discussion. The Constitution of Massachusetts is the most time-honored of all the written constitutions now in existence, and the day is evidently not very remote when it must again pass into the hands of the workmen. In another paper, in a future number of this Review, it is proposed to follow up the discussions of the Butler canvass in its other aspect, no longer as stimulating class enmities, but now as initiating an agitation which seems likely to lead in Massachusetts, not to the personal aggrandizement which the agitator promised himself, but to that of which probably he never thought, and for which certainly he did not care, — a convention to revise the Constitution of the State, after half a century of continuous and successful working.